



Hazing in View: College Students at Risk

***Initial Findings from the National Study of
Student Hazing***

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Documented problems related to student hazing include physical and psychological harm and even death. ***Hazing in View: College Students at Risk*** provides the initial findings of the National Study of Student Hazing. The research is based on the analysis of 11,482 survey responses from undergraduate students enrolled at 53 colleges and universities and more than 300 interviews with students and campus personnel at 18 of those institutions.

For this study, hazing was defined as “any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them regardless of a person’s willingness to participate.” The following findings are discussed in the report:

- 55% of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing.
- Hazing occurs in, but extends beyond, varsity athletics and Greek-letter organizations and includes behaviors that are abusive, dangerous, and potentially illegal.
- Alcohol consumption, humiliation, isolation, sleep- deprivation, and sex acts are hazing practices common across types of student groups.
- There are public aspects to student hazing including: 25% of coaches or organization advisors were aware of the group’s hazing behaviors; 25% of the behaviors occurred on-campus in a public space; in 25% of hazing experiences, alumni were present; and students talk with peers (48%, 41%) or family (26%) about their hazing experiences.
- In more than half of the hazing incidents, a member of the offending group posts pictures on a public web space.
- More students perceive positive rather than negative outcomes of hazing.
- In 95% of the cases where students identified their experience as hazing, they did not report the events to campus officials.
- Students recognize hazing as part of the campus culture; 69% of students who belonged to a student activity reported they were aware of hazing activities occurring in student organizations other than their own.
- Students report limited exposure to hazing prevention efforts that extend beyond a “hazing is not tolerated” approach.
- 47% of students come to college having experienced hazing.
- Nine out of ten students who have experienced hazing behavior in college do not consider themselves to have been hazed.

Researchers provide general recommendations for campus personnel, college and university administrators, and those working with college students including:

- Design hazing prevention efforts to be broad and inclusive of all students involved in campus organizations and athletic teams.
- Make a serious commitment to educate the campus community about the dangers of hazing; send a clear message that hazing will not be tolerated and that those engaging in hazing behaviors will be held accountable.
- Broaden the range of groups targeted for hazing prevention education to include all students, campus staff, administrators, faculty, alumni, and family members.
- Design intervention and prevention efforts that are research-based and systematically evaluate them to assess their effectiveness.
- Involve all students in hazing prevention efforts and introduce these early in students' campus experience (i.e., orientation).
- Design prevention efforts to be more comprehensive than simply one-time presentations or distribution of anti-hazing policies.

This is the first in a series of reports to be released from the data collected in this investigation. Subsequent reports will examine other aspects of the data in more depth including: recommendations for hazing prevention, gender differences in hazing, high school hazing experiences, hazing within particular types of student groups, and regional and institutional-type comparisons of student hazing.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the initial findings from the National Study of Student Hazing: *Examining and Transforming Campus Hazing Cultures*.

11,000+ SURVEY
RESPONSES

53 COLLEGE CAMPUSES
NATIONWIDE

300+ PERSONAL
INTERVIEWS

The study is based on survey responses from 11,482 post-secondary students on 53 campuses across the United States and more than 300 interviews with staff and students from 18 of those campuses. It is the most comprehensive examination of student hazing to date. We thank the campuses that agreed to participate in this landmark study, and are grateful for the support of more than 30

professional associations and organizations, as well as numerous individuals who gave time and resources to support and guide the study (Appendices B & C). The findings provided in this report and subsequent analyses can be accessed through www.hazingstudy.org.

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OVERVIEW

Rationale

Psychological and physical harm are commonly reported outcomes of hazing. Sometimes the behavior can be deadly as documented by Nuwer's chronology of hazing deaths (www.hazing.hanknuwer.com). For educational institutions, the risks include student attrition, abusive campus climates, and negative publicity to name a few.

Stereotypes often shape perceptions of hazing as only a problem for athletes and Greek-letter organizations; hazing behaviors are often dismissed as simply harmless antics and pranks. These views are shortsighted and may jeopardize the health and safety of students as well as hinder the overall quality of the learning environment in schools and post-secondary institutions. Professional staff and administrators who are aware of dangers inherent in hazing often report feeling discouraged and perplexed by entrenched attitudes and beliefs that support a culture where hazing is normalized as part of college life.

Despite decades of documented problems, hazing is an issue that has been largely overlooked and under studied until recent years. The most extensive data regarding hazing practices were generated from the Alfred University/NCAA study on college athletes (Hoover & Pollard, 1999). Other accounts of hazing have been provided by author/journalist Hank Nuwer (1990, 1999, 2000); and Ricky Jones (2004), who writes about hazing in Black Greek-letter fraternities. Several thesis and dissertation studies have examined hazing in particular contexts; for example, in Greek life (Holmes, 1999; Lowery, 1998; Shaw, 1992), athletics (Gervais, 2000; Johnson, 2000; McGlone, 2000; Robinson 1998), and

on individual campuses (Ellsworth, 2004). As well, some campuses have examined hazing among their student body (e.g., www.hazing.cornell.edu).

In addition to these examples, for nearly a decade the StopHazing.org website, (co-founded by Elizabeth Allan) has received regular email queries from students who have been involved in hazing activities as members of marching bands, theatre groups, ski clubs, church groups, club sports, freshman camp, orientation groups, military groups, residence living units, and other social and academic clubs. However, until now, no national studies have investigated the levels of hazing across a wider range of student organizations and across multiple institutions.

Significance

This study is unusual due to its magnitude and scope; it is the first to examine hazing across a range of student organizations and athletic teams within the context of diverse types of colleges and universities in different regions of the United States. Insights from the study can help identify those students and student groups most at risk for hazing; delineate prominent hazing behaviors; examine student understanding of hazing, campus hazing prevention efforts, and student hazing experiences in high school; and provide baseline data for measuring changes in hazing over time.

Through the vision and efforts of many, this study fills major gaps in the research and extends the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding about hazing.

Background

The National Study of Student Hazing: *Examining and Transforming Campus Hazing Cultures*, was conceptualized in 2003–2004 under the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth J. Allan, Principal Investigator, in collaboration with the North American

Interfraternal Foundation (NIF) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA).

In 2005, the North American Interfraternal Foundation (NIF), with support from the NASPA Foundation and other collaborating partners, provided funding for the development and implementation of **Phase I** of this investigation. Also during that time, Dr. Mary Madden, Associate Research Professor at the University of Maine, joined the initiative and has been instrumental in working with Allan to implement the investigation.

Pilot Study

Phase I of this multi-year research initiative was a **pilot study** (Allan & Madden, 2005) that served as a springboard for the comprehensive national study. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess sampling strategies and test the effectiveness of recruitment strategies for respondents, develop a web-based survey instrument and test its reliability, test interview protocols, and conduct a trial analysis of data. The pilot study data collection was conducted from February–May, 2005 with students and staff at four post-secondary institutions in the Northeast and included a web-based survey for students and interviews with students, staff, and administrators at each campus. Participating institutions included a small private college as well as three larger public universities. For additional details about the methods of the pilot study, see Appendix D.

NATIONAL STUDY GOALS AND METHODS

Research Goals

The goals of the national study are to:

- Investigate the nature and extent of hazing behaviors among students in U.S. colleges and universities.
- Offer research-based strategies for responding to and preventing the problem of hazing among college students with transferability to middle and secondary schools.

Data Collection

Data collected for the national study occurred in the following two stages:

Stage One: The Survey

11,482 students at 53 postsecondary institutions completed a web-based survey. The survey was launched twice, once in April–May 2007, and again in October 2007 with a subset of institutions. Institutions were selected to ensure representation from across all regions of the United States according to NASPA's regional schema and according to several Carnegie classification criteria (public/private, size, and setting).

The survey included more than 100 items related to hazing including questions about student experiences with hazing behaviors, perceptions about hazing on their campus, awareness of institutional hazing policies, consequences of hazing,

and experiences with hazing prior to college. The survey was piloted in Spring 2005 with over 1,750 college students at four colleges and universities. Following the pilot study, the survey was further refined in consultation with the Research Advisory Group.

A substantial portion of the survey featured questions related to hazing behaviors. First, students were provided with a list of organizations and teams and asked to identify up to two student activities or teams in which they have been most involved during college. For each affiliation with a team or organization, participants were given a list of behaviors, most of which met the definition of hazing. Respondents were then asked if the behavior happened to him/herself or others in the group as part of joining or belonging to that team or organization. The list of questions was programmed to allow for each to be tailored to the respondent and to reference the specific team or organization in which the student was involved. Respondents indicating they were not involved with any team or organization were asked to respond to questions related to their experiences with student organizations and teams in high school.

The list of hazing behaviors included in the survey was developed through focus groups with undergraduate students, review of the literature related to hazing, and the expertise of the Research Advisory Group.* The survey included more than 30 types of hazing behaviors including the following:

- Attend a skit night or roast where other members are humiliated
- Sing or chant by yourself or with a few select team members in a public situation that is not related to the event, game, or practice
- Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of the uniform
- Be yelled, screamed, or cursed at by other team/organization members
- Get a tattoo or pierce a body part
- Act as a personal servant to other members
- Associate with specific people and not others

- Deprive yourself of sleep
- Be awakened at night by other members
- Make prank phone calls or harass others
- Be tied up, taped, or confined to small spaces
- Be transported to and dropped off in an unfamiliar location
- Endure harsh weather without the proper clothing
- Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage such as water
- Participate in a drinking game
- Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of passing out or getting sick
- Watch live sex acts
- Perform sex acts with same gender

Each institution provided researchers with a random sample of student email addresses consisting of 25% of their full-time undergraduate student population, ages 18 to 25 years. These students received an email invitation to participate in the survey along with a web address and a pin number to enter the survey. The pin number ensured that each student responded only once to the survey.

The **overall response rate of the survey was 12%** based on the number of surveys completed as a percentage of total email invitations sent. When using the Internet, it is uncertain how many respondents actually received the email invitation. We could, however, track the number of respondents

who arrived at the first page of the survey after clicking-through from the email invitation. Of these, a completion rate is calculated reflecting the number of respondents who finish the survey as a percentage of those who actually arrive at the survey location on the web. The **completion rate was 67% for the April–May 2007** launch of the survey and **73% for the October** administration of the survey.

**25% OF ENROLLED
STUDENTS PER INSTITUTION**

12% RESPONSE RATE

**67-73% COMPLETION
RATE**

Stage Two: Campus Visits

A. Interviews

The two lead researchers and two additional interviewers made campus visits during Fall semester 2007. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with approximately 20 staff and students at each of 18 colleges and universities—a subset of the 53 participating in the national survey. Institutions were selected for interviews based on the following criteria: a) minimum response rate to the survey; b) geographic location; and c) type of institution. The final pool of institutions participating in the interviews represented large and small public and private institutions across NASPA regions.

Interviews were 30–60 minutes in duration and were audiotaped and later transcribed for analysis. The total number of interviews exceeds 300 for the national study, supplementing the 90 interviews conducted for the pilot study. Participants included student leaders, student affairs and athletics staff, and senior student affairs administrators. In advance of each campus visit, researchers worked with an appointed student affairs staff member to identify interviewees and schedule the interviews with male and female students involved in a range of student organizations and athletic teams and representative of the campus' socio-cultural diversity.

B. Documents

Educational, training, and policy documents were collected from the 18 institutions participating in the interview stage of the study.

Participant Demographics

A total of 11,482 undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 25 completed the survey. The following tables provide information on gender, race/ethnicity, and year in school.

Table 1. Gender

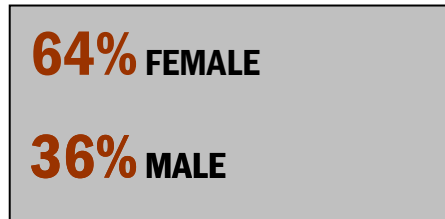


Table 2. Race/Ethnicity

	Percentage
White/Caucasian	75%
Asian	7%
Multi-racial	5%
Hispanic or Latino	5%
Black or African American	3%
Other	2%
Not identified	3%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	<1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%

Year in school at the end of the semester prior to survey was as follows:

	Percentage
1 st year	30%
2 nd year	23%
3 rd year	23%
4 th year	18%
>4 th year	6%

FINDINGS

The initial findings of the study are presented in the following pages. For these findings, the emphasis was a descriptive analysis of the survey data and was supplemented by interview data.

Interpreting Survey Data

As previously described, the survey was designed for on-line administration and therefore involved skip patterns to tailor the questions for each respondent. As a result, while we report the total numbers of completed surveys as 11,482, the actual number of responses to each question may differ depending on those responding to a particular question and the extent to which they were involved in student organizations or teams on campus.

Of the 11,482 student respondents to the survey, 37% reported they were *not* involved in any activity on their campus; 48% reported on their membership experiences for *one* team or organization; and 15% reported on their membership experiences for *two* teams or organizations.

PLEASE NOTE: Where findings refer to the number of membership experiences (in contrast to the number of individual students) this will be noted. For example, if a student responded to the list of questions first as an athlete, and then as a member of an honor society, we typically report on these as two distinct

membership experiences. When reviewing the data, it is also important to understand that students had the right to skip questions they did not wish to answer. Therefore, the total number of responses to questions varies.

FINDING 1:

More than half of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing.

For this research, we used the following standard definition of hazing: **“Hazing is any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them regardless of a person’s willingness to participate.”**

When given a list of behaviors that meet this definition, 55% of respondents report they have experienced at least one of these in relation to their involvement in a campus club, team, or student organization. More specifically, 61% of male respondents and 52% of female respondents who are involved with a student organization or team have experienced a behavior that meets the definition of hazing.

FINDING 2:

Hazing occurs across a range of student groups.

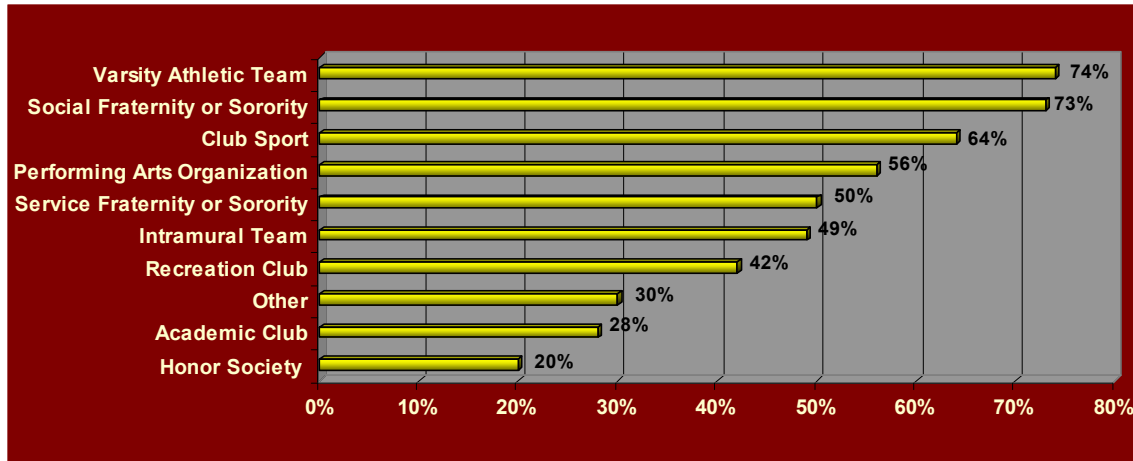
As we learned during the interviews, students often associate hazing with Greek-letter organizations explaining that hazing is “. . . *things I have seen on TV with fraternities and sororities and paddling and stuff.*” Yet survey responses indicate that students who were members of a range of different types of campus groups and teams reported experiencing hazing behaviors.

While data confirm that hazing is occurring in Greek-letter organizations, the research also reveals the presence of hazing in other student groups including varsity athletics, club sports, intramural teams, military groups, recreation clubs, service fraternities and sororities, performing arts organizations (e.g., marching bands and theater groups), honor societies, academic clubs, and other groups students elected to identify separately.

As displayed in Figure 1.0, students affiliated with varsity athletics and social fraternities and sororities are most likely to experience hazing. Seven out of 10 students report they experienced at least one hazing behavior to join or maintain membership on the team or in a social Greek-letter organization. Nearly as many, six out of 10 students affiliated with a club sport; and five of 10 affiliated with performing arts groups, and service Greek-letter organizations, and nearly as many (49%) of those affiliated with intramural teams report they have experienced at least one hazing behavior in order to join or maintain their membership in the group.

Following these, **recreation clubs or interest groups** (42%), **academic clubs** (28%), **honor societies** (20%) and those who indicated they belonged to other organizations (these included a range of groups, but primarily fell into the following categories: religious clubs and organizations, student government, and culturally-based organizations that were *not* Greek-letter groups) (30%). The following chart displays the percent of students that experienced at least one hazing behavior in association with membership in specific organizations or teams.

Figure 1. Percent of students in each activity that experienced at least one hazing behavior.



* Other includes religiously-affiliated organizations, culture clubs and organizations, and student government.

FINDING 3:

Alcohol consumption, humiliation, isolation, sleep-deprivation, and sex acts are hazing practices common across student groups.

While our first finding speaks to the extent of hazing among various student groups/teams, the research also examined the nature of hazing among students. The following charts display the types of hazing

“STUDENTS ARE PARTICIPATING IN UNACCEPTABLE, HIGH-RISK, AND POTENTIALLY ILLEGAL BEHAVIORS TO BELONG TO A STUDENT GROUP OR TEAM.”

behaviors most frequently reported by students. Table 3 documents the most frequently reported hazing behaviors across all types of student groups. Tables 4 and 5 examine the frequency of behaviors by gender of respondents, and Tables 6–15 delineate the most frequently reported hazing behaviors by type of student group.

Overall, it appears college students are participating in unacceptable, high-risk, and potentially illegal behaviors in order to belong to a student group or team. A

closer look at the following Tables reveals similarities and differences among groups in the most frequently reported hazing behaviors.

Table 3. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: All Respondents' Membership Experiences

Participate in a drinking game	26%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	17%
Associate with specific people and not others	12%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	12%
Deprive yourself of sleep	11%
Be screamed, yelled, or cursed at by other members	10%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	10%
Be awakened during the night by other members	9%
Attend a skit or roast where other members of the group are humiliated	6%
Endure harsh weather conditions without appropriate clothing	6%
Perform sex acts with the opposite gender	6%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	6%

(N=9,067)

Table 4. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: Male Membership Experiences

Participate in a drinking game	31%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	19%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	17%
Be screamed, yelled, or cursed at by other members	16%
Associate with specific people and not others	14%
Deprive yourself of sleep	13%
Be awakened during the night by other members	12%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	13%
Perform sex acts with opposite gender	10%
Endure harsh weather conditions without appropriate clothing	9%
Attend a skit or roast where other members of the group are humiliated	9%

(N=3,462)

Table 5. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: Female Membership Experiences

Participate in a drinking game	23%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event	16%
Associate with specific people and not others	10%
Deprive yourself of sleep	10%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	9%
Be awakened during the night by other members	7%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	7%
Be screamed, yelled, or cursed at by other members	6%
Get a tattoo or pierce a body part	5%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	5%

(N=5,590)

Table 6. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: Varsity Athletics

Participate in a drinking game	47%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	27%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	24%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	23%
Be screamed, yelled, or cursed at by other members	21%
Endure harsh weather conditions without appropriate clothing	18%
Associate with specific people and not others	16%
Deprive yourself of sleep	16%
Shave head or other body parts	16%
Perform sex acts with opposite gender	16%
Get a tattoo or pierce a body part	15%

(N=640)

Table 7. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: Social Fraternities and Sororities

Participate in a drinking game	53%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	31%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	26%
Be awakened during the night by other members	19%
Be screamed, yelled, or cursed at by other members	18%
Deprive yourself of sleep	17%
Associate with specific people and not others	16%
Attend a skit or roast where other members of the group are humiliated	14%
Perform sex acts with the opposite gender	10%
Act as a personal servant to others members	9%
Watch live sex acts	9%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	9%
Be transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location	9%

(N=1,295)

Table 8. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: Service Fraternities and Sororities

Participate in a drinking game	26%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	18%
Be awakened during the night by other members	10%
Deprive yourself of sleep	10%
Associate with specific people and not others	9%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	9%
Be transported and dropped off in an unfamiliar location	7%
Attend a skit or roast where other members of the group are humiliated	6%
Be screamed, yelled, or cursed at by other members	6%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	6%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	6%

(N=544)

Table 9. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: Club Sports (e.g., Rugby Team)

Participate in a drinking game	41%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	20%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	19%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	17%
Be screamed, yelled, or cursed at by other members	15%
Associate with specific people and not others	12%
Endure harsh weather conditions without appropriate clothing	11%
Deprive yourself of sleep	10%
Be awakened during the night by other members	9%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	9%

(N=701)

**Table 10. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors:
Intramural Sports**

Participate in a drinking game	28%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	16%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	15%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	13%
Be screamed, yelled, or cursed at by other members	11%
Associate with specific people and not others	10%
Perform sex acts with the opposite gender	9%
Be awakened during the night by other members	7%
Deprive yourself of sleep	7%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	6%

(N=1,060)

**Table 11. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors:
Performing Arts Groups (e.g., marching band, chorus)**

Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	25%
Participate in a drinking game	23%
Associate with specific people and not others	19%
Deprive yourself of sleep	17%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	12%
Endure harsh weather conditions without appropriate clothing	9%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	8%
Attend a skit or roast where other members of the group are humiliated	8%
Be awakened during the night by other members	6%
Perform sex acts with opposite gender	5%

(N=818)

**Table 12. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors:
Recreation Clubs (e.g., ski club, outing club)**

Participate in a drinking game	20%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	10%
Drink large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out	9%
Associate with specific people and not others	9%
Deprive yourself of sleep	9%
Drink large amounts of a non-alcoholic beverage	9%
Be awakened during the night by other members	6%
Wear clothing that is embarrassing and not part of a uniform	6%

(N=648)

**Table 13. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors:
Academic Clubs**

Participate in a drinking game	10%
Associate with specific people and not others	8%
Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	6%
Deprive yourself of sleep	6%

(N=1,061)

**Table 14. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: Honor
Society**

Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	6%
Deprive yourself of sleep	6%
Participate in a drinking game	5%
Associate with specific people and not others	5%

(N=759)

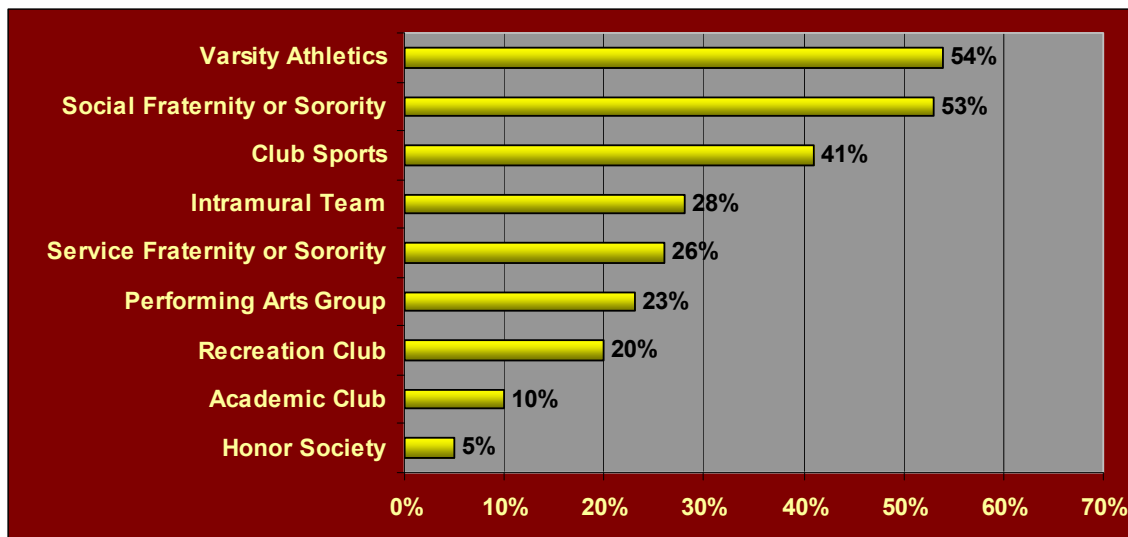
Table 15. Most Frequently Reported Hazing Behaviors: Other Organizations (e.g., religious groups, culturally-based groups, and student government)

Sing or chant by self or with select others of groups in public in a situation that is not a related event, game, or practice	13%
Participate in a drinking game	10%
Deprive yourself of sleep	10%
Associate with specific people and not others	8%

(N=1,419)

According to the data, alcohol plays a major role in hazing behaviors. A leading hazing behavior across nearly all student organizations and teams is *participation in drinking games* (see Table 2). More than half of students' experiences with varsity athletic teams and social fraternities and sororities include drinking games. However, interview data indicate the extent of alcohol-related hazing differs for students who are affiliated with culturally-based fraternal groups. Data will be further analyzed to examine this difference in subsequent reports.

Figure 2. Hazing Behavior: Participation in Drinking Games



FINDING 4:

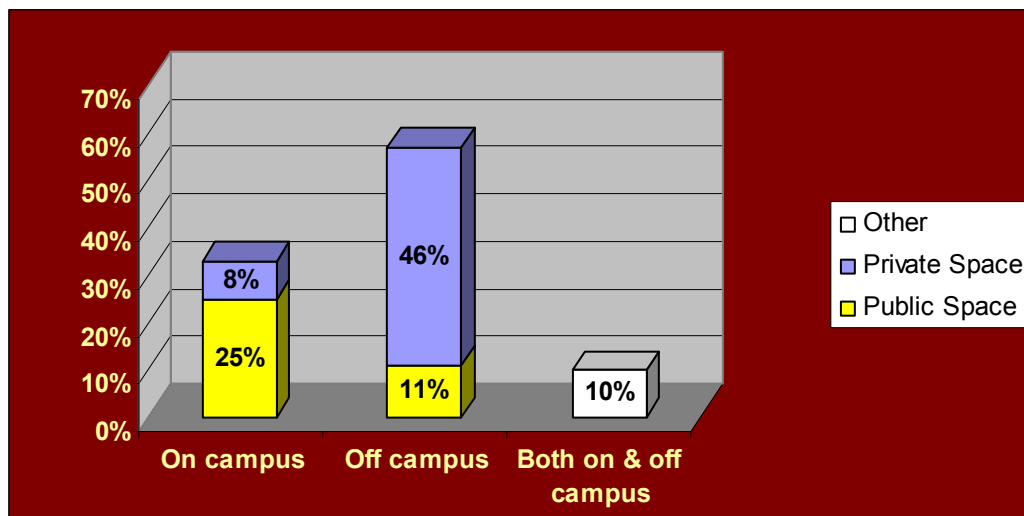
Knowledge of hazing extends beyond the student groups engaging in the behavior.

Secrecy and silence are common characterizations of the dynamics of hazing. However, analysis of the data reveals there are a number of public aspects to hazing including the location of hazing activities, posting photos of these activities on public web spaces, and knowledge of hazing among coaches, advisors, alumni, family, and friends.

For instance, when students (who reported experiencing hazing behavior) were asked where the behaviors occurred, *one in four said it had occurred in a public space on campus* and nearly half indicated the hazing had occurred during the day.

The following figure provides additional information about location and time of the hazing experiences of students in this study.

Figure 3. Location of Hazing Activities



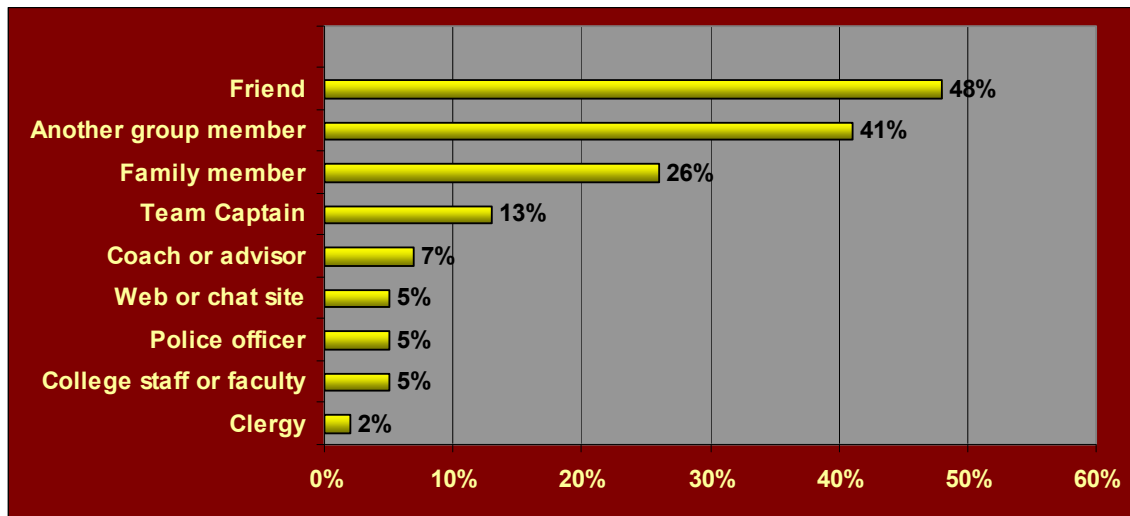
Who knows about campus hazing?

Aside from the students involved in the groups/teams where hazing occurs, who else may have knowledge of hazing? According to the survey responses, coaches, advisors, friends, and family have knowledge of hazing in some cases. The specific findings are as follows:

- **In 25% of hazing experiences, students believed coaches and/or advisors were aware of the activities.**
- **In 25% of hazing experiences, students reported that alumni were present.**
- **Students are most inclined to talk with peers (48%, 41%) or family (26%) about their hazing experiences.**

Of the student membership experiences (team or organization) where one or more hazing behaviors occurred, students were most likely to have talked with a friend and another member of the team or organization. Students were least likely to talk with clergy or a counselor. Figure 4 provides details on who students talk to when they experienced hazing.

Figure 4. Who Students Talk with About Hazing Experiences



Hazing on Display

- **In more than half of hazing experiences, students reported that photos of the activities were posted on public Web spaces.**

Where a student reported at least one hazing behavior in connection to her/his membership in a group, 53% say a member of their team or organization posted photos of the hazing activity on a public web space like Facebook or MySpace. Another 42% report posting the hazing photos themselves.

During the interviews, students, staff, and administrators described experiences where they learned about campus hazing behaviors as a result of photos circulating on the Internet.

Finding 5:

More students perceive positive rather than negative outcomes of hazing.

The survey provided a list of potential results of participation in hazing behaviors and asked students to indicate if they had experienced any of these. The list included 4 positive and 16 negative outcomes of hazing. The positive results of hazing were more often cited by students than the negative results. For example, 31% of the time students said they felt like more a part of the group while they felt stressed 11% of the time. Tables 16 and 17 provide more information about students reports of positive and negative effects of hazing.

During interviews, numerous students justified hazing practices based on their perception that it promotes bond or group unity. However, the survey results indicate that the majority (two-thirds) of respondents do not cite this as an outcome of their hazing experiences. Similarly, hazing is often rationalized by saying it promotes “a sense of accomplishment.” However, the data reveal that more the three-fourths of the respondents do not identify “sense of accomplishment” as an outcome of their hazing experiences.

Table 16. Perceived Positive Results of Hazing

Feel more like a part of the group	31%
Feel a sense of accomplishment	22%
Feel stronger	18%
Do better in classes	15%

Table 17. Perceived Negative Results of Hazing

Feel stressed	11%
Have problems in relationships	8%
Feel guilty	4%
Have difficulty sleeping	4%
Have difficulty concentrating in classes	4%
Have trouble with academics	4%
Feel humiliated or degraded	3%
Feel depressed	3%
Incur physical injuries	3%
Want revenge against organizers of the activity	3%
Quit the team or organization	3%
Feel in danger	2%
Look forward to my chance to do it to new recruits	2%
Need to visit a health center, doctor, or counselor	2%
Consider transferring to another college or university	2%
Feel like I don't want to live anymore	1%

Finding 6:

Students are not likely to report hazing to campus officials.

Of those who labeled their experiences as hazing (after reading the survey definition), 95% said they did not report the events to campus officials. When provided with a list of reasons for not reporting hazing, 37% said they did not want to get their team or group in trouble, but even more (54%) chose “other” as their response (see Table 18 for additional results).

Table 18. Reasons for Not Reporting the Hazing Activities

Other	54%
I didn't want to get my team or group in trouble	37%
I was afraid of negative consequences to me as a individual from other team or group members	20%
I was afraid other members of the team or group would find out I reported it and I would be an outsider	14%
Did not know where to report it	9%
I might be hurt by team or group members if they learned I had reported it	8%

When asked why they did not report their hazing experience, more than half of the respondents (54%) provided a reason other than what was listed. When these student explanations were examined, the following patterns emerged:

Minimization of hazing

- "It was no big deal."
- "No one was harmed."
- "I didn't consider the hazing to be extreme or troubling."

Being hazed is a choice

- "I had a choice to participate or not."
- "I knew it would occur and was willing to be hazed. Consequently I didn't feel it bore reporting."
- "I was happy and willing to do all of the things I did, I have no desire to report them."

Rationalization

- It "made me a better man."
- "It made me and my brothers better people. It was a positive experience!"
- "Feelings afterward outweighed the pain or stress felt during it."

Normalization

- "It was tradition so didn't mind."
- "Hazing is a right of passage. If you can't take it, get out."

Lack of Awareness

- “I didn’t understand it was hazing until much later.”
- “I didn’t know it was hazing and I felt no harm in it.”

Disagreement with “definitions” of hazing

- “There is no problem with some actions the law considers hazing.”
- “Because the given definition of hazing does not allow for significant and important practices which encourage personal development.”
- “Don’t believe there are negative consequences to the hazing observed by YOUR definition of hazing.”

Finding 7:

Students recognize hazing as part of the campus culture.

Students who reported on their experiences with at least one team or student organization were asked about hazing in student organizations on their campus, other than

**69% OF STUDENTS SAY
THEY ARE AWARE OF
HAZING BEHAVIORS.**

those to which they belong. **Nearly seven out of ten students (69%) say they are aware of hazing behaviors** occurring within teams and student organizations on their campus. **Nearly one in four (24%)** reported witnessing these hazing behaviors.

This large number of students reporting knowledge of hazing suggests that hazing may be perceived as a typical part of the campus culture. These perceived norms may influence the extent to which students choose to participate in and/or tolerate hazing.

Further, knowledge of a group’s hazing activities prior to joining does not appear to deter students from joining teams or student organizations. In fact, 32% of

students who belonged to a student group or team had heard of or were aware of hazing behaviors before joining.

Finding 8:

Students report limited exposure to prevention efforts that extend beyond a “hazing is not tolerated” approach.

The survey asked students if they had been exposed to common practices aimed at preventing hazing on college campuses. The data show that anti-hazing policies were introduced to 39% of students as they were joining a team or organization. Other prevention strategies to which students were frequently exposed include positive group activities, being told where to report hazing, and being made aware of a coach or advisor expectation that hazing would not occur. The least reported prevention activities to which students report being involved are workshops on hazing presented by either adults or peers. Table 19 provides additional information on the frequencies of commonly using prevention and intervention strategies.

Table 19. Prevention and Intervention Strategies Experienced by Students

Members of group participate in community service	62%
Students were told about anti-hazing policies during new student orientation	54%
Students were told where to report suspected hazing	52%
Coach or advisor made clear his/her expectations that there would be no hazing	50%
Members of the team or organization were given a written copy of anti-hazing policy when joining team or organization	39%
Members of the team or organization signed a contract stating they would not participate in hazing behaviors	35%
Student attended a hazing prevention workshop presented by adults	15%
Student attended a hazing prevention workshop presented by peers	14%

Finding 9:

Students come to college having experienced hazing.

**47% OF RESPONDENTS
REPORT EXPERIENCING
HAZING DURING HIGH
SCHOOL.**

For many students who step onto a college campus and choose to join a team or organization, hazing is not a new experience. The survey asked students to provide

information on their high school experiences in joining and/or belonging to teams or student activities in their high schools. **Forty-seven percent of the respondents report experiencing at least one hazing behavior while in high school**, including 51% of the male and 45% of the female respondents. However, 84% of those who reported experiencing a hazing behavior do not consider themselves to have been hazed.

A much smaller percentage of students (6%) admit to hazing someone else while they were in high school, including 9% of male and 4% of female respondents.

Finding 10:

A gap exists between student experiences of hazing and their willingness to label it as such.

- **Of students who report experiencing a hazing behavior in college, 9 out of 10 do not consider themselves to have been hazed.**

Most students who report having experienced a hazing behavior do not label their experience as hazing. While more than half (55%) of college student respondents who affiliate with a student organization or team report experiencing at least one hazing behavior as a part of joining or maintaining membership in their group, nine out of ten (91%) do not view the experience as hazing. During the interviews, students provided many explanations that offer clues to understanding this gap.

First, many students identify hazing with physical force involving activities such as paddling, beating, or tying up perspective members. Still, others acknowledge that hazing involves more than physical force but do not perceive harm in other forms of hazing. As one student said, *“Hazing is good and hazing is bad. It depends on how you are using it. If you are using it to inflict harm on someone then it is bad.”*

Other students explained that in order to constitute hazing, an activity must be against the will of a person. Many students did not account for the power of coercion involved in hazing dynamics. In describing their own and others' experiences, if a student perceived that one had made a “choice” to participate, then often the activity did not constitute hazing. In fact, many maintained this belief while acknowledging that their college/university or a national professional

organization/association held a different position. The following student comment illustrates this position,

“I think hazing is something that you are kind of forced to do to be a part of something against your own will. But I have been told is that even if you are willfully doing it then it is [still] hazing. That is where my perception of hazing is different from others, because if I think it is fun and something someone wants to do then it should not be considered hazing.”

For many it was a struggle to define hazing. As one student said, *“hazing is one of those things that you know, like pornography, you know it is not something you can really define and you know it when you see it.”* Many described hazing as a “gray” area like the following student who said, *“Hazing in my opinion is just a gray term... It comes out to a real personal preference.”*

Further complicating the definition of hazing for students was that many believed an activity did not constitute hazing if it had a productive purpose as explained by a student who said, *“I think there are a lot of definitions of hazing. One that I have heard is anything that makes someone feel uncomfortable or threatened without a constructive purpose.”*

Student definitions of, as well as rationalizations and justifications for hazing, are nuanced and complex. Their explanations have the potential to offer valuable insights into student attitudes and beliefs and common perceptions about hazing. These will be explored in more depth and reported on in a subsequent report.

Limitations

This report describes the initial findings of the *National Study on Student Hazing: Examining and Transforming Campus Cultures*. There are many more aspects

of both the survey and interview data that will be analyzed and reported in the coming months.

Each participating institution provided a random sample of 25% of their full-time undergraduate student population, ages 18 to 25. Our ability to determine an exact return rate is limited by the use of a web-based instrument to survey students. The procedure used to recruit student participants involved an email invitation sent to their campus email address. The degree to which students rely on their campus email varies by institution. If an email did not bounce we assumed it was delivered to the correct address, however, we have no way to determine if students utilize the address to which the email was sent. Therefore, the response rate of 12% (based on the number of emails sent out and the number of returns) does not account for email invitations not read by students. It is likely that the response rate is underestimated.

While the survey may not be representative of all students' experiences in joining student organizations, we feel confident the number of student respondents provides the basis for valid analysis to promote an understanding of student hazing behaviors and to measure future changes in this behavior.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following implications and general recommendations emerge from this report of the initial findings. A follow-up report will provide more detail. Summary paragraphs are followed by the relevant recommendation below:

Data from this study support the conclusion that **hazing is woven into the fabric of student life and campus culture in U.S. colleges and universities**. More than half (55%) of the students who become involved in campus student organizations, clubs, and teams are hazed in the process of becoming a member or maintaining membership in these groups, and nearly seven in 10 students (69%) say they are aware of hazing in organizations other than their own.

Over the years, images of hazing have been most closely associated with fraternities (and, more recently, varsity athletic teams). However, this investigation found **hazing among undergraduate students is far more widespread**. Students report experiencing hazing behaviors across a range of group-types including athletic teams and Greek-letter groups as well as club sports, intramurals, performing arts groups, service fraternities and sororities, recreation clubs, academic clubs, honor societies; and some students indicated they had experienced hazing in other kinds of groups as well including military groups, religious or church-based groups, student government, and culturally-based student organizations.

Recommendation 1:

Design hazing prevention efforts to be broad and inclusive of all students involved in campus organizations and athletic teams.

Hazing is sometimes dismissed as nothing more than silly pranks or harmless antics, yet **data from this investigation indicate hazing often involves high-risk behaviors that are dangerous, abusive, and potentially illegal.** Disturbingly, a number of the most frequently reported types of hazing practices have been implicated in college student deaths in recent years (e.g., drinking to the point of passing out and drinking large amounts of non-alcoholic beverage). Aside from the fact that hazing itself is illegal in 44 states, hazing is also likely to violate the law through underage drinking and sexual activities where consent is questionable due to the coercive dynamics and peer pressure inherent in hazing. These same dynamics contribute to a group context where embarrassment, humiliation, and degradation can take an emotional toll and lead to what is called the *hidden harm* of hazing—the emotional scars that can result from the humiliating and degrading aspects of hazing**.

Recommendation 2:

Make a serious commitment to educate the campus community about the dangers of hazing; send a clear message that hazing will not be tolerated and that those engaging in hazing behaviors will be held accountable.

Hazing is not the well-kept secret that some may have believed; the findings noted **several public aspects to hazing including coach and student organization advisors' awareness of hazing practices, friends and family's knowledge of hazing, and photos of hazing posted on public web spaces.**

Recommendation 3:

Broaden the range of groups targeted for hazing prevention education to include all students, campus staff, administrators, faculty, alumni, and family members.

To date, hazing awareness and prevention efforts in postsecondary education have largely focused on students in Greek-life and more recently intercollegiate athletes. Yet, the data from this study indicate that students affiliated with these groups continue to be at high-risk for hazing as more than seven in ten students belonging to these groups report experiencing at least one hazing behavior in relation to their involvement. The extent of hazing in these groups prompts questions about the effectiveness of past and present prevention efforts.

Recommendation 4:

Design intervention and prevention efforts that are research-based and systematically evaluate them to assess their effectiveness.

Nearly half of the students (47%) report experiencing hazing behaviors prior to coming to college indicating that students may expect to be hazed when they join teams and organizations connected to their postsecondary institution.

Recommendation 5:

Involve all students in hazing prevention efforts and introduce these early in students' campus experience (i.e., orientation).

Findings from this investigation highlight some of the complexities related to hazing on college campuses. For example, this research found that students identify more positive than negative consequences of hazing; students are least likely to report hazing to campus officials and police; and only one in two students report they have been made aware of campus anti-hazing policy.

As well, it is clear students have a limited understanding of the definition of hazing and risks associated with it. This is highlighted by the fact that more than half of students involved in campus groups experience a hazing behavior, but a

mere fraction of these (nine out of ten) consider themselves to have been hazed. In addition, students who have been hazed tend to dismiss institutional and legal definitions of hazing and minimize the potential harm that can result.

Recommendation 6:

Design prevention efforts to be more comprehensive than simply one-time presentations or distribution of anti-hazing policies. Focus on helping all students:

- Develop an understanding of the power dynamics so they can identify hazing regardless of context.
- Understand the role that coercion and groupthink can play in hazing.
- Recognize the potential for harm even in activities they consider to be “low level.”
- Generate strategies for building group unity and sense of accomplishment that do not involve hazing.
- Align group membership behavior with the purpose and values espoused by their organizations and teams.
- Develop leadership skills needed to deal with resistance to change among group members.
- Develop critical thinking skills needed to make ethical judgments in the face of moral dilemmas.

SUMMARY

Data from this investigation can inform the development and fine-tuning of hazing prevention efforts. In order to be effective, these efforts need to be far-reaching and focused on a process of transforming aspects of the campus culture that support hazing across a range of student organizations and teams. Data from this investigation also can serve as a baseline from which to measure change

over time and to assess the effectiveness of research-based hazing prevention and intervention efforts on college campuses.

Hazing is a complex issue and a problem that can interfere with the health and safety of students and impede the development of a positive campus climate. At present, there are no simple solutions or foolproof methods of eliminating hazing on a college campus. As this research sheds light on the nature and extent of hazing behaviors among college students in the United States, the next steps in this project include further analysis of the national hazing study data with the release of a series of subsequent reports. The series of reports, to be issued throughout the remainder of 2008, will examine other aspects of the data (e.g., gender differences, high school experiences, and recommendations for prevention) in more depth.

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www.StopHazing.org

Notes

*The survey used in the NCAA/Alfred study provided a foundation from which to construct the survey for this investigation. Both Norm Pollard, one of the lead researchers for that study, and Hank Nuwer, an advisor to that research were exceedingly helpful in working with us to construct the list of hazing behaviors provided in the survey.

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APPENDIX A

Project Personnel

Elizabeth Allan, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Dr. Allan is an Associate Professor of Higher Educational Leadership at The University of Maine. She is a former Student Affairs Staff member with experience in Student Activities, Greek Life, Judicial Affairs, Community Development, and Student Leadership Programs. She has authored a number of articles, book chapters, and encyclopedia entries on the topic of hazing, and is co-founder and manager of the educational website www.StopHazing.org.

Dr. Allan has given interviews about hazing for a PBS documentary, for other television, newspapers, and radio and periodicals including *Sports Illustrated*, *Teen People*, *Glamour*, *Rolling Stone*, *British Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Congressional Quarterly*. Her research related to campus cultures and climates has been published in the *Harvard Educational Review* (2003), the *Maine Journal of Education* (2004), *Innovative Higher Education* (2005), *The Journal of Higher Education* (2006), and *The Review of Higher Education* (2006).

Mary Madden, Ph.D.
Project Director

Dr. Madden is an Associate Research Professor in the College of Education and Human Development at The University of Maine where she is a faculty member in the Center for Research and Evaluation. Her fields of expertise are girls' development and education and gender equity issues. She has extensive experience in developing and implementing program evaluations and research studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Her work focuses on the social and emotional development of youth and includes evaluations of youth suicide prevention programs, development and evaluation of a curriculum to build

girls' coalition groups, and a study of classroom climate for undergraduate women. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Higher Education* (2006), and the *Handbook for Achieving Gender Equity in Education* (2007).

Lori Smith
Research Analyst

Ms. Smith is a Research Associate in the College of Education and Human Development Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine. She brings extensive experience analyzing quantitative data and managing large databases. During her ten years at the Center for Research and Evaluation, she has contributed to numerous research and evaluation studies related to education and human development and served as the lead analyst for the survey data for this investigation.

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We would like to thank the following individuals who participated on the research team traveling to campuses across the U.S. to conduct interviews.

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Lauri Sidelko, Director of Alcohol and Drug Education Programs, Doctoral student, Higher Education Leadership, University of Maine

APPENDIX B

Project Partners

- Alpha Omicron Pi
- Alpha Phi Omega
- American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
- Association for Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA)
- Association of Fraternity Advisors (AFA)
- Association of Fraternity Advisors (AFA) Foundation
- Beta Theta Pi
- Center for the Study of the College Fraternity (CSCF)
- Delta Delta Delta Foundation
- Fraternity Executives Association (FEA)
- Kappa Alpha Order Fraternity and Foundation
- MJ Insurance
- National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) Foundation
- National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA)
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA)
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- NASPA Foundation
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
- National Consortium for Academics and Sports (NCAS)
- National Orientation Directors Association (NODA)
- North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC)
- North American Interfraternal Foundation (NIF)
- National Panhellenic Conference (NPC)
- Professional Fraternity Association (PFA)
- Professional Fraternity Executives Association (PFEA)
- Phi Sigma Sigma Sorority

- Pi Beta Phi Sorority and Foundation
- Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity
- Sigma Chi Fraternity
- Sigma Nu Fraternity
- Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity

APPENDIX C

Current Advisory Group Members

- Ms. Jessica Bartter, Assistant Director for Marketing and Communications of the National Consortium for Academics and Sports (NCAS)
- Dr. Ron Binder, Associate Director of Residence Life for Greek Affairs, Bowling Green State University; President, Association of Fraternity Advisors (AFA)
- Dr. Kent Blumenthal, Executive Director, National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA)
- Ms. Martha Brown, Past Chairman, National Panhellenic Conference (NPC)
- Mr. Mike Cleary, Executive Director, National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA)
- Mr. David Coyne, Chairman, North-American Interfraternal Foundation
- Mr. Gary Dickstein, Assistant Vice President/Director Student Judicial Affairs, Wright State University; representing Association for Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA)
- Dr. Gwen Dungy, Executive Director, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- Dr. Danell Haines, Director, National Research Institute for College Recreational Sports & Wellness, The Ohio State University
- Dr. Debbie E. Heida, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment and Dean of Students, Berry College
- Mr. Tom Helmbock, Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity
- Dr. Terrence Hogan, Vice President for Educational and Student Services, University of Northern Iowa, Past Chair of NASPA Knowledge Community on Fraternity/Sorority Life
- Ms. Andrene Kaiwi-Lenting, Assistant Director, Student Life and Leadership Coordinator, Orientation Programs at CalPoly; representing the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA)
- Mr. Bob London, National Executive Director, Professional Fraternity Executives Association
- Ms. Mary Beth Mackin, Assistant Dean of Student Life, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater; Representing the Association for Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA)
- Dr. Richard McKaig, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & faculty member in Student Affairs & Higher Education, Indiana University
- Mr. Hank Nuwer, Professor of Journalism, Franklin College
- Mr. John Ogle, Director of Education and Research, National Association for Campus Activities (NACA)
- Dr. Laura Osteen, Director of Leadership Programs, Florida State University; representing the American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
- Dr. Norm Pollard, Vice President for Student Affairs, Alfred University
- Dr. Judith Ramaley President, Winona State University

Dr. John Schuh, Distinguished Professor and Chair, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Iowa State University; representating the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)

Dr. William Smedick, Special Assistant to the Dean of Student Life, Johns Hopkins University, representing the National Association of Campus Activities (NACA)

Dr. Stephen Sweet, Professor of Sociology, Ithaca College

Ms. Cindy Stellhorn, President, North-American Interfraternal Foundation

Ms. Mary Wilfert, Assistant Director of Education and Outreach, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

Ms. Louise Kier Zirretta, past President of the North American Interfraternal Foundation (NIF)

APPENDIX D

Pilot Study Methods

The Survey

Full-time undergraduate students under the age of 25 were invited to respond to the web-based survey. Each institution generated the student sample for the study. The two smaller institutions were asked to include all the students that fit the sample criteria for the study while the two larger institutions were asked to produce a random sample of students who fit the criteria. An invitation to participate in the survey was sent to students via email. This email invitation provided a code and a hyperlink to access the web-based survey. Students who completed the survey were entered into a drawing for one of fifty \$10 iTunes gift certificates. The survey consisted of 70 questions and was designed so participants could respond to these questions relative to three different membership groups. For example, a student belonging to a varsity team, a fraternity, and an academic club would respond to the set of questions for each of these activities separately.

Ninety-percent of the students who accessed the web-based survey completed it. In all, 1,789 full-time undergraduate students under the age of 26 who belonged to a student activity responded to the survey. Two-thirds of the respondents were female and one-third male. Eighty-six percent of the respondents identified their race /ethnicity as White. Sixty-nine percent of the students lived on-campus.

The Interviews

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 90 individuals at the four campuses. Participants included student leaders, student affairs and athletics staff, and senior student affairs officers. At each campus, project staff worked with a student affairs staff member to select interviewees and schedule the interviews. The staff members were given a list of staff positions and student

organizations from which to recruit individuals for the interviews. Interviews were 30-60 minutes in duration and were audiotaped and later transcribed for analysis.

This study provided the opportunity for researchers to test sampling strategies and data collection instruments. It also provided insights into hazing that will be further investigated in the national study.